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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT; UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

Letter dated 13 December 1994 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the General Assembly

As you are aware, in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 35/10 A of 3 November 1980, the Assembly decided that all proposals relating to the schedule of conferences and meetings made at sessions of the Assembly should be reviewed by the Committee on Conferences when administrative implications were being considered under the requirements of rule 153 of the rules and procedure. Accordingly, on 8 December 1994 I transmitted a letter to all members of the Committee on Conferences regarding four draft resolutions requiring exceptions to General Assembly resolution 40/243 that have meanwhile been adopted by the Second Committee - A/C.2/49/L.27 (superseded by draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.61); A/C.2/49/L.30; A/C.2/49/L.32 (superseded by draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.65); and A/C.2/49/L.36 (superseded by draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.68).

With regard to the proposal contained in draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.27, the Committee was informed that, as the headquarters of the substantive secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) is in Nairobi, the convening of the third substantive session of the Preparatory Committee in New York would require an exception to the arrangements established

by resolution 40/243. Such an exception was granted to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Regarding the proposal contained in draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.30, the Committee was informed that, as the headquarters of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, is in Geneva, the convening of a two-week session in Nairobi would require an exception to the arrangements established by resolution 40/243. Such an exception was granted to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth and forty-seventh sessions.

As to the proposal contained in draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.32, the Committee was informed that a statement of programme budget implications had been issued and was available in document A/C.2/49/L.55. As indicated in that statement, the headquarters of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is in Geneva, therefore the convening in New York of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s would require an exception to the arrangements established by resolution 40/243. Moreover, under paragraph 6 of its resolution 40/243, the General Assembly reaffirmed its instruction to all its subsidiary organs, inter alia, to complete their reports for the following session of the Assembly no later than 1 September. Under paragraph 7, the Assembly decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly may meet at Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly. The convening of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting would thus require two further exceptions to the arrangements established by resolution 40/243.

Concerning the proposal contained in draft resolution A/C.49/L.36, the Committee was informed that, as the headquarters of UNCTAD is in Geneva, the convening in New York of the meeting of governmental experts of island developing countries, donor countries and development and trade-related institutions would require an exception to the arrangements established by resolution 40/243.

In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of resolution 35/10 A, the Committee on Conferences is required to advise the General Assembly on granting a departure from section I, paragraphs 4, 6 and 7, as appropriate, of General Assembly resolution 40/243. I am thus transmitting to you the Committee's recommendations.

The Committee was of the view that, as a general rule, taking into account the additional burden on the Organization that exceptions frequently entail, compliance with resolution 40/243 should be enforced. However, in view of past practice with regard to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, the Committee on Conferences recommends to the General Assembly that it should grant an exception to section I, paragraph 4, of resolution 40/243, thereby authorizing the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human

Settlements (Habitat II) and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to meet away from their established headquarters.

However, the Committee on Conferences recommends to the Assembly that it should not grant an exception to section I, paragraphs 4, 6 and 7, of resolution 40/243 and recommends that the UNCTAD High-level Meeting on the Mid-term Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, be convened at the established headquarters of UNCTAD.

Lastly, regarding draft resolution A/C.2/49/L.36, while the Committee was of the view that an exception to section I, paragraph 4, of resolution 40/243 should not be granted in the case of the meeting of governmental experts of island developing countries, donor countries and development and trade-related institutions, under the provisions of paragraph 7 of the revised draft resolution (A/C.2/49/L.68), such an exception is no longer necessary.

Maria ROTHEISER
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Committee on Conferences